



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9193

Sep 6, 2006

EVENT: Statement

Defendant: Louai Abdelhamied Othman et al

STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES ATTORNEY STEPHEN J. MURPHY

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today that on Tuesday, September 5, 2006, after a preliminary examination lasting 4 hours, Magistrate Judge Charles E. Binder dismissed a complaint charging Louai Abdelhamied Othman, Adham Abdelhamid Othman, and Maruan Awad Muhareb with conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit goods and services, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 and 2320 and money laundering, in violation of Title 18 U.S.C. § 1956. The defendants had been arrested by local authorities in Caro, Michigan in possession of approximately 1000 cell phones on August 11, 2006. Defendants had purchased 74 cell phones between 1:28 a.m. and 2:09 a.m. at the Wal-Mart in Caro, Michigan, in 24 separate purchases. The evidence presented at the Preliminary Exam included agent testimony that the accused men had stated that they were purchasing the cell phones so that they could sell them at a marked-up price to middle-men. The defendants further indicated that they were aware the phones were to be reprogrammed by third parties and sold overseas. Magistrate Binder did not issue a written opinion, but stated that the evidence did not show probable cause as to the existence of a conspiracy between the charged defendants and the persons responsible for reprogramming the cell phones.

Mr. Murphy stated: "We respect the judge's decision and the process. Investigation continues and the matter is under review at this time."